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9 June 1948

MEMO FOR RECORD

Mr. Herbert Feis, Economist. [redacted]

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Mr. Feis telephone stating that he has been in communication with the Department of the Army - talked to the Secretary, the Under-Secretary who in turn referred him to General Bolling.

Mr. Feis is writing a book on the internal situation of Japan prior to Pearl Harbor (1939-1941). He reports he has been given access to certain Government archives on which to base his study. Certain files which he wants to get he has been told by General Bolling have been transferred to CIA. They are Reports of Interrogation of Jap Officers on Economic, Financial and Diplomatic Matters covering the period 1939-1941. He added that Army would be glad to request that these files be made available to him. Told him I would look into the matter and call him later.

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After discussing briefly with [redacted] he suggested that Mr. Feis be told that Army no doubt could give us more specific information on the particular files in question and if Army would send formal request we could then determine what if any of these files could be transferred to Army for the purpose in question.

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This I did. Reply was: "Oh, hell!"

I explained further that our files cannot be examined by civilians, under established policies. His remark following this was: "Do you want those files to just sit there and rot?"

Told him that we were responsible by law for the safe-guarding of classified information, and that he no doubts sees our position in this regard. He added that he realized our position but did not agree with it.

He went on to say that if he went to Army and they sent in a request, we probably would write them back that we could not make the files available for the purpose intended and that he would be right back where he started. I added that this impression was not entirely correct: That some of our information is unclassified and it may turn out that what he wants would be in that category.

After some lengthy discussion, I finally suggested that if he so wished to write the DCI a letter explaining fully just what he wanted, stating his reasons he wanted them for, and then the DCI would then be in a better position to determine whether he could legally allow Mr. Feis to see the material. He said he would do that.

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File: Feis, Herbert

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